THE ELEVENTH DAY

Friday, the 13th March 1931.

The Assembly met again at 11-30 A. M. on Friday, the 13th March 1931, the Dewan presiding.

186. Administrative Reforms.

MR. N. K. PADMANABHA PILLAI (*Neyyattinkara taluk, Group I*), speaking in Malayalam, said that, of all the representations made in the Assembly, the question of administrative reforms was the most important one. During the previous ten sessions of the Assembly, he had repeatedly represented about the matter, but without any result. The Sri Mulam Popular Assembly was started 27 years ago, at a time when the Head of the Administration and the heads of the different departments had no facilities to move about the various parts of the country to know first hand the needs and grievances of the people. It was a time when the people had no correct idea of representative institutions or of popular rights. Then it was a useful institution. Though 27 years had elapsed, the Assembly had remained the same, without any change in its status or privileges. But the times had changed and with it the political outlook of the people. Hence the first administrative reform that should be attempted was the reform of the Assembly, in conformity with the wishes of the people and to suit the changed times. In reply to the same representation at the 24th session of the Assembly, the then Dewan promised to take up the question in all its aspects during the course of the succeeding year. During the previous session also, the Dewan had promised to take it up for earnest examination and consideration. It was true that the Government had done something in the matter by removing sex disqualification and making women also eligible for franchise and membership. The previous speakers had explained in detail the lines on which the Assembly was to be reconstituted. The Assembly should be placed on a statutory basis; the members should be empowered to discuss and pass resolutions; the electorate should be widened by the reduction of the property qualification of voters; the term of membership should be extended to three years; and the members should have the right to discuss the annual budget and to ask interpellations.

The member next spoke about the necessity for the establishment of responsible government in the country. The history of the western and eastern countries showed that the one method to ensure the prosperity of both the rulers and the ruled was by the introduction of responsible government. It was true that the benign rulers of the State had always been solicitous of the welfare of the people of the country and had been always anxious to reform the administrative machinery of the State by conferring on the people rights and privileges gradually. It was also gratifying that the Sovereigns of the

State were constitutional Rulers who always acted only on the specific recommendations of the Dewan. But still the absence of responsible Government was keenly felt by the people. It was now many years since the people had begun to agitate through their representative institutions and the newspapers of the country for the establishment of responsible government, but without any effect. Evidently the Head of the Administration was unwilling to surrender to the people the unfettered powers and privileges now enjoyed by him. Here all responsibilities were vested in the Dewan. It was true that there was a Legislative Council in the State, which had been in existence for the last 43 years. But its powers were limited. The Dewan was the President. Many important subjects were kept out of the purview of the Council. The Government were not bound to accept the recommendations of the Council. The Dewan was free to disregard the resolutions of the Council totally and make and unmake rules as he pleased. There would be some radical change in the system of administration in British India. The people there were about to be granted full self-government. It was a great pity that Travancore, which was far advanced than British India in many respects, was denied such a privilege. It was the earnest and unanimous desire of the people that an Executive Council, responsible to the Legislature, and composed of members elected by the Legislative Council and the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly should be established in the country at an early date. Every attempt should be made for the early introduction of responsible Government in the State, in conformity with the wishes of the people.

187. Administrative Reforms.

MR. S. JANARDHANAN NAIR (*Nedumangad taluk,*), speaking in Malayalam, first expressed the feelings of thankfulness of the people of Travancore in general and of the citizens of Nedumangad taluk in particular, towards Her Highness the Maha Rani Regent for so readily responding to the wishes of the people in appointing only the sons of the soil as Dewans in the State. He also thanked the Dewan for giving a patient hearing to the representations made by the members of the Assembly and requested him to bestow greater attention to the needs of the country in the light of those representations. He also presented a memorial signed by the members of the Assembly, requesting that, in view of the settlement arrived in British India as a result of the Irwin-Gandhi agreement, the prosecution against the *Bhrijabharatam* newspaper for sedition, should be withdrawn immediately.

Passing on to his subject, the member first spoke about unemployment and poverty in the State, their causes and the remedies therefor. The costly method of the present system of education was one of the main causes. Primary education, though free in the State, put the parents to much unnecessary expenditure towards the purchase of text books and note books. The evil should be remedied. The system of education, which was purely literary, was faulty, in as much as it killed the pupils' imagination, dwarfed their intellect and ruined their